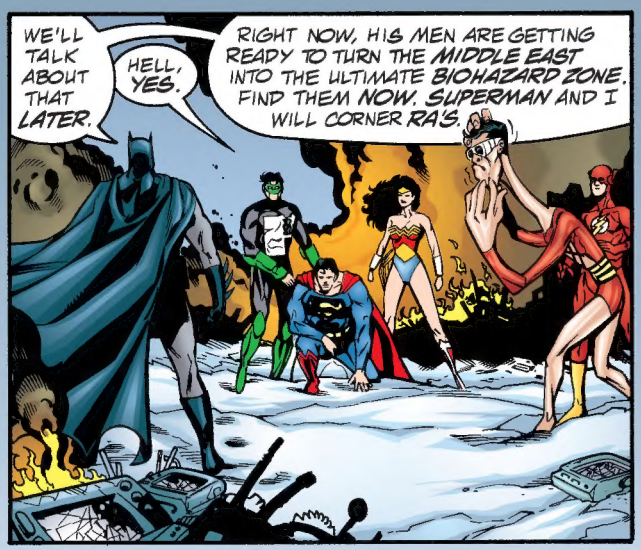
THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-HEROES!
JLA
46
OCT 00
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
WAID
SCOTT
PROPST
TOWER OF BABEL
CONCLUSION
dccomics.com
HOWARD • DREW

EVERY TIME J'ONN J'ONZZ EVEN THINKS ABOUT TRYING THIS, HE SHUDDERS.
NANITES HAVE BONDED TO HIS EPIDERMIS, CAUSING HIM TO BURST INTO FLAME AT ANY CONTACT WITH AIR.
STILL, EVEN MARTIANS SHED SKIN CELLS... NOT SOMETHING THE TRAP'S DESIGNER CONCERNED HIMSELF WITH...
...SINCE HE NEVER FORESAW J'ONN WOULD STILL BE ALIVE AT THIS POINT.
J'ONN'S TIRED OF BEING HELPLESS. HOLDING HIS BREATH, HE GINGERLY REMOVES THE GLOVE OF HIS HERMETICALLY SEALED SUIT...
...AND GASPS WITH RELIEF (AND STILL MUCH PAIN) TO FIND HE'S SLOUGHED OFF ENOUGH NANITES TO AT LEAST FUNCTION.
HIS FRIENDS NEED HIM. ECOTERRORIST AND CRIMELORD RA'S AL GHUL HAS TARGETED THEM ALL, EXPLOITING THEIR SPECIFIC WEAKNESSES.
FOR EXAMPLE:
AQUAMAN THINKS HE'S SAFE HERE IN THE DESERT. A TOXIN HAS MADE HIM PATHOLOGICALLY AFRAID OF THAT WHICH HE ALMOST HOURLY REQUIRES TO LIVE.
WATER.

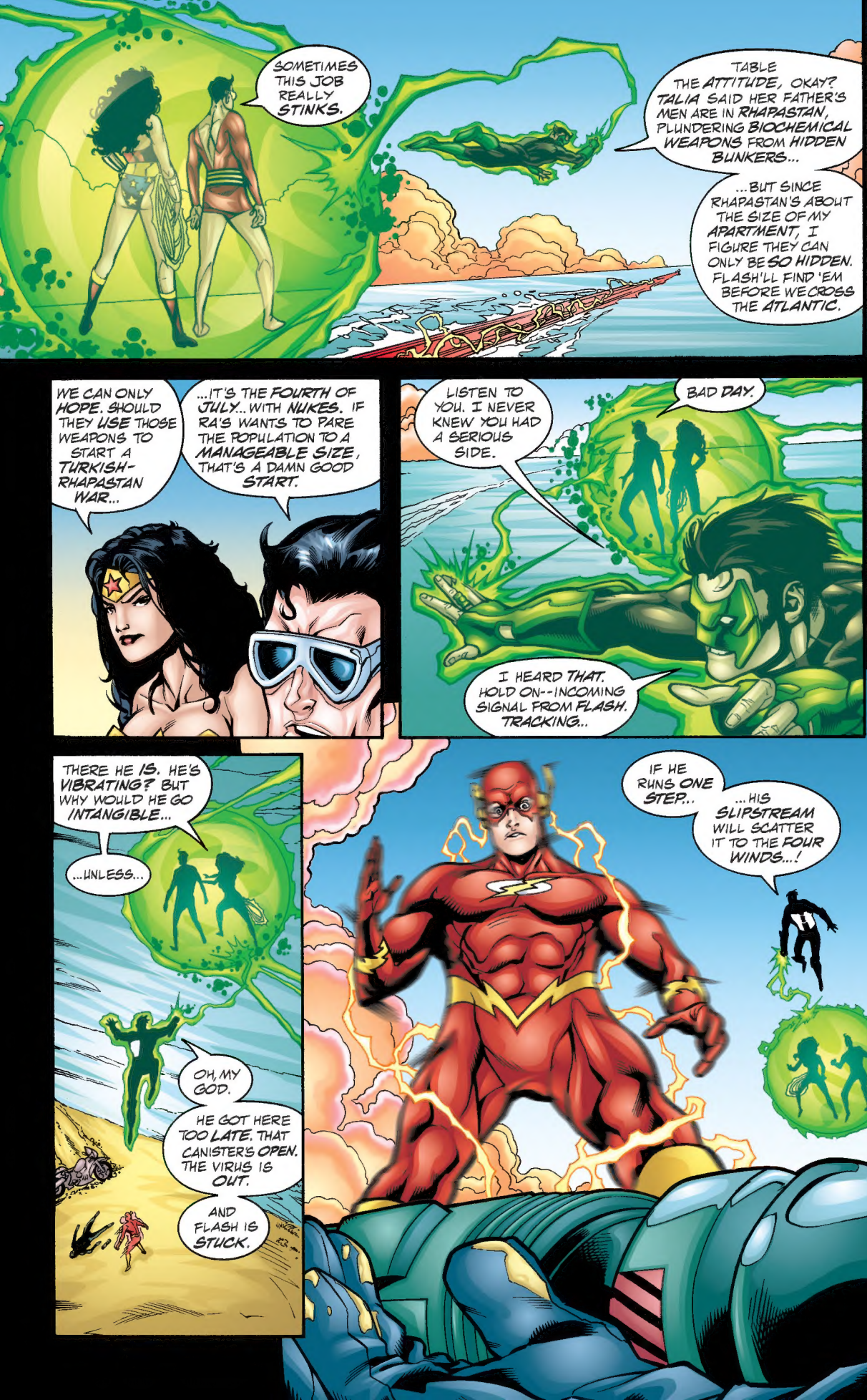
UNFORTUNATELY, NOW THAT J'ONN'S CONCENTRATION HAS LAPSED, AQUAMAN'S BEGINNING TO SENSE THE TRUTH.
THE DESERT'S A MIRAGE...
...A TELEPATHIC ILLUSION CAST BY HIS SMOLDERING TEAMMATE.
THE OTHER LEAGUERS HAVE DESTROYED AL GHUL'S LANGUAGE SCRAMBLER. STILL, SO LONG AS THAT MADMAN RUNS FREE, WE REMAIN IN D--
ARTHUR!
H'RONMEER! HE'S PANICKING! UNLESS I DO SOMETHING...
... HE'LL DIE OF FRIGHT!
ARTHUR, STAY CALM! LISTEN TO ME!
IF YOU'RE TO SURVIVE, YOU HAVE TO DENY THIS FEAR! IF YOU CAN'T, THEN TURN IT INTO SOMETHING ELSE!
TURN IT INTO ANGER!
REMEMBER WHO DID THIS TO YOU! THINK ABOUT WHO BETRAYED YOUR TRUST!
"THINK ABOUT BATMAN!"
ALL RIGHT. WE SPLIT UP.
I'M NOT DOING ANYTHING THAT MEANS I TURN MY BACK ON YOU.
RA'S FROZE ME AND MADE ME A PIÑATA! HE MADE LANTERN BLIND AND SET J'ONN ON FIRE! AND WHERE'D HE GET SUCH CLEVER IDEAS?
FROM
YOU!

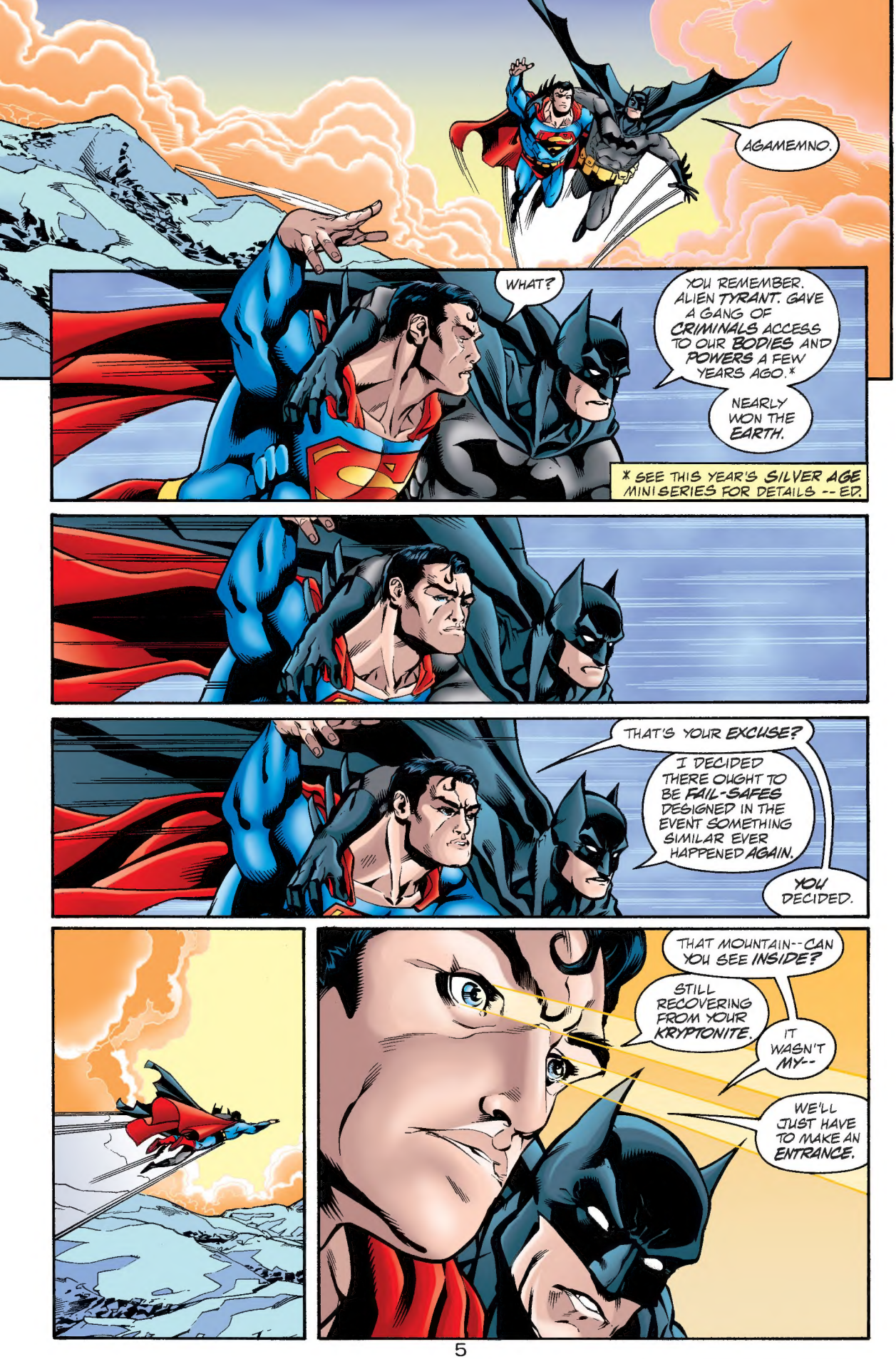

WE'LL TALK ABOUT THAT LATER.
HELL, YES.
RIGHT NOW, HIS MEN ARE GETTING READY TO TURN THE MIDDLE EAST INTO THE ULTIMATE BIOHAZARD ZONE. FIND THEM NOW. SUPERMAN AND I WILL CORNER RA'S.

TOWER OF BABEL PART 4

HARSH WORDS

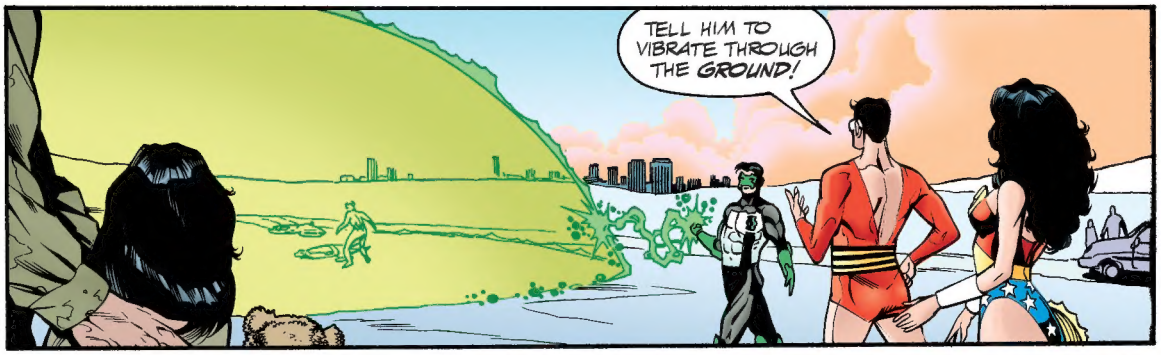
MARK WAID STORY STEVE SCOTT GUEST PENCILS
MARK PROPST GUEST INKS KEN LOPEZ LETTERS
JOHN KALISZ COLORS HEROIC AGE SEPARATIONS
TONY BEDARD ASSOCIATE EDITOR DAN RASPLER EDITOR


SOMETIMES THIS JOB REALLY STINKS.
TABLE THE ATTITUDE, OKAY? TALIA SAID HER FATHER'S MEN ARE IN RHAPASTAN, PLUNDERING BIOCHEMICAL WEAPONS FROM HIDDEN BUNKERS...
...BUT SINCE RHAPASTAN'S ABOUT THE SIZE OF MY APARTMENT, I FIGURE THEY CAN ONLY BE SO HIDDEN. FLASH'LL FIND 'EM BEFORE WE CROSS THE ATLANTIC.
WE CAN ONLY HOPE. SHOULD THEY USE THOSE WEAPONS TO START A TURKISH-RHAPASTAN WAR...
...IT'S THE FOURTH OF JULY... WITH NUKES. IF RA'S WANTS TO PARE THE POPULATION TO A MANAGEABLE SIZE, THAT'S A DAMN GOOD START.
LISTEN TO YOU. I NEVER KNEW YOU HAD A SERIOUS SIDE.
BAD DAY.
I HEARD THAT. HOLD ON--INCOMING SIGNAL FROM FLASH. TRACKING...
THERE HE IS. HE'S VIBRATING? BUT WHY WOULD HE GO INTANGIBLE...
...UNLESS...
OH, MY GOD.
HE GOT HERE TOO LATE. THAT CANISTER'S OPEN. THE VIRUS IS OUT.
AND FLASH IS STUCK.
IF HE RUNS ONE STEP...
...HIS SLIPSTREAM WILL SCATTER IT TO THE FOUR WINDS...!


AGAMEMNO.
WHAT?
YOU REMEMBER. ALIEN TYRANT. GAVE A GANG OF CRIMINALS ACCESS TO OUR BODIES AND POWERS A FEW YEARS AGO.*
NEARLY WON THE EARTH.
* SEE THIS YEAR'S SILVER AGE MINISERIES FOR DETAILS -- ED.
THAT'S YOUR EXCUSE?
I DECIDED THERE OUGHT TO BE FAIL-SAFES DESIGNED IN THE EVENT SOMETHING SIMILAR EVER HAPPENED AGAIN.
YOU DECIDED.
THAT MOUNTAIN--CAN YOU SEE INSIDE?
STILL RECOVERING FROM YOUR KRYPTONITE.
IT WASN'T MY--
WE'LL JUST HAVE TO MAKE AN ENTRANCE.

THIS IS HE?
YES, MY LORD.
THE ONE WHO SHOT MY DAUGHTER.
SHE--SHE WAS GIVING INFORMATION TO THE ENEMY! SHE--
YOU SHOT.
MY DAUGHTER.
MUH-MY LORD, I WUH-WOUNDED HER TO S-SILENCE HER! I HUH-HAD NO CH-CHOICE! I TH-THOUGHT YOU'D BE-- SHE WOULD HAVE--
--DONE WHAT? WE'LL NEVER KNOW... BECAUSE SHE'S VANISHED. SHE'S WOUNDED AND RUNNING.
WOULD THAT YOU WERE SO FORTUNATE.
AMONG THOSE NOBLE SPECIES I HAVE ENDEAVORED TO SAVE OVER THE YEARS IS THE ALL-BUT-EXTINCT BARBARY LION.
TWO OF THE TWELVE EXISTENT LIVE HERE UNDER MY CARE...
...AND FEEDING.
EYAAAAAAH!

THOOM
THE ALIEN.
COME. HE HAS TWO WEAKNESSES, ONE OF WHICH WE SHARE:
AN UNYIELDING COMPASSION FOR THE ANIMAL KINGDOM.
STALL HIM.
KLIK
KLAK
KLAK
NNNHH...
DON'T LOSE SIGHT OF RA'S. WHICH WAY DID HE GO?
THROUGH THERE.


TELL HIM TO VIBRATE THROUGH THE GROUND!

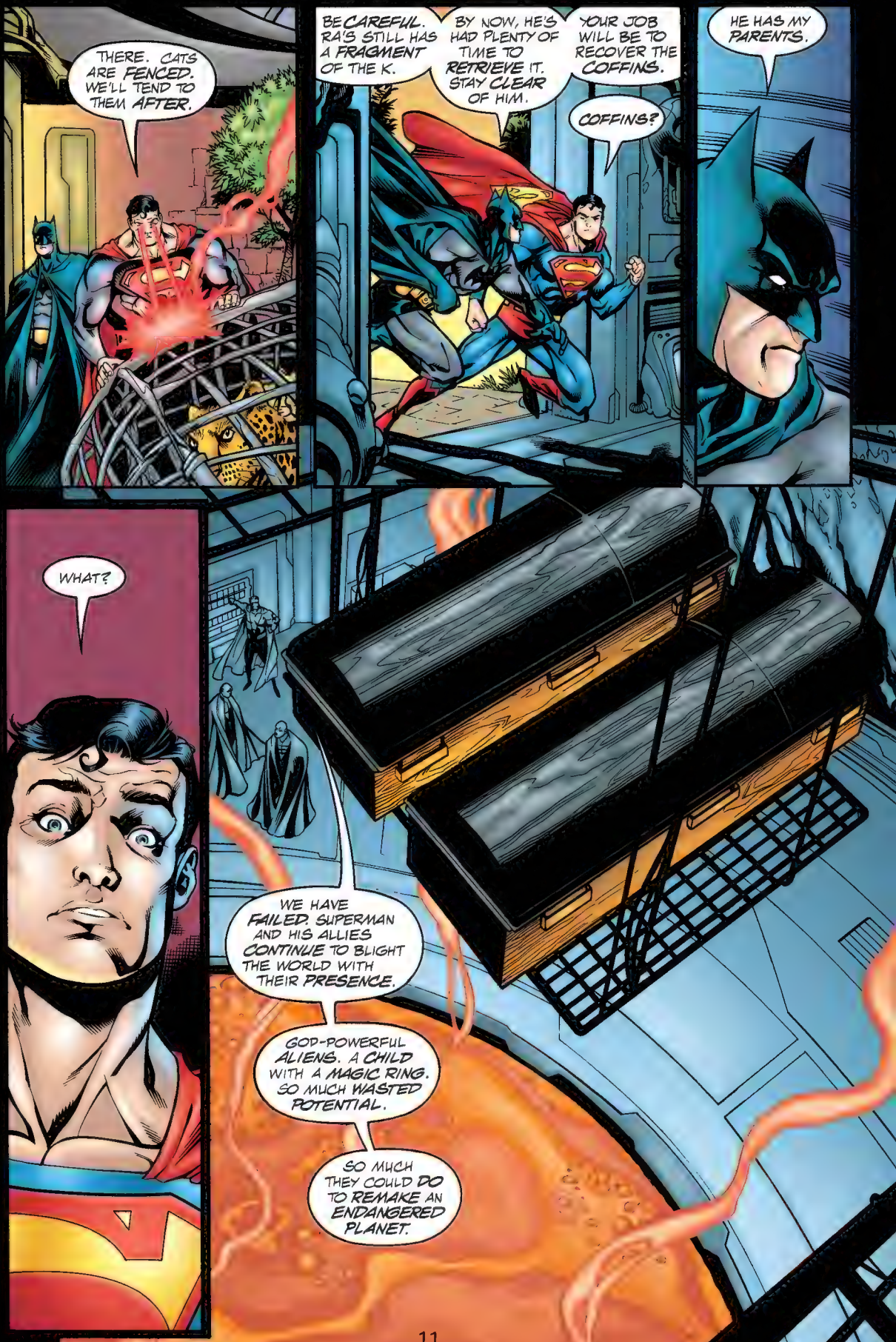
AND GO WHERE? IF HE'S INFECTED, HE'LL CARRY THE BIO AT SUPER-SPEED!
I CAN CONTAIN THE AREA... I THINK...
...BUT I CAN'T LEAVE THESE PEOPLE. TALIA SAID THERE WERE TWO GERM CANISTERS--
--SO WE'LL FIND THE OTHER ONE. LET'S GO.

ST-STEBYAN'S GAS MASK WAS D-DEFECTIVE! WHAT IF MUH-MINE--?
STEBYAN'S WAS A FLUKE, AND HE MISHANDLED HIS CANISTER. WE WILL NOT MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE.
WE ARE NEAR ENOUGH TO THE TURKISH BORDER THAT PREVAILING WINDS WILL CARRY THE TOXINS IN, PROVIDED WE FIND A HIGH GROUND. THIS WILL DO.
YOU GET TO THE ROOF.

I WILL CREATE A DIVERSION.
BUDDABUDDABUDDABUDDA

SPANG
SPANG
SPANG
LOVE TO--BUT HE HASN'T GOT IT! WHERE'D IT GO?
PLASTIC MAN! GRAB THE CANISTER!
UP HERE!

WHOOSH
BONK
HERA!
EEEEEE!
AAAAAAH!
!
YANK
BEEP
FF WHEN TO OPEN


THERE. CATS ARE FENCED. WE'LL TEND TO THEM AFTER.
BE CAREFUL. RA'S STILL HAS A FRAGMENT OF THE K.
BY NOW, HE'S HAD PLENTY OF TIME TO RETRIEVE IT. STAY CLEAR OF HIM.
YOUR JOB WILL BE TO RECOVER THE COFFINS.
COFFINS?
HE HAS MY PARENTS.
WHAT?
WE HAVE FAILED. SUPERMAN AND HIS ALLIES CONTINUE TO BLIGHT THE WORLD WITH THEIR PRESENCE.
GOD-POWERFUL ALIENS. A CHILD WITH A MAGIC RING. SO MUCH WASTED POTENTIAL.
SO MUCH THEY COULD DO TO REMAKE AN ENDANGERED PLANET.

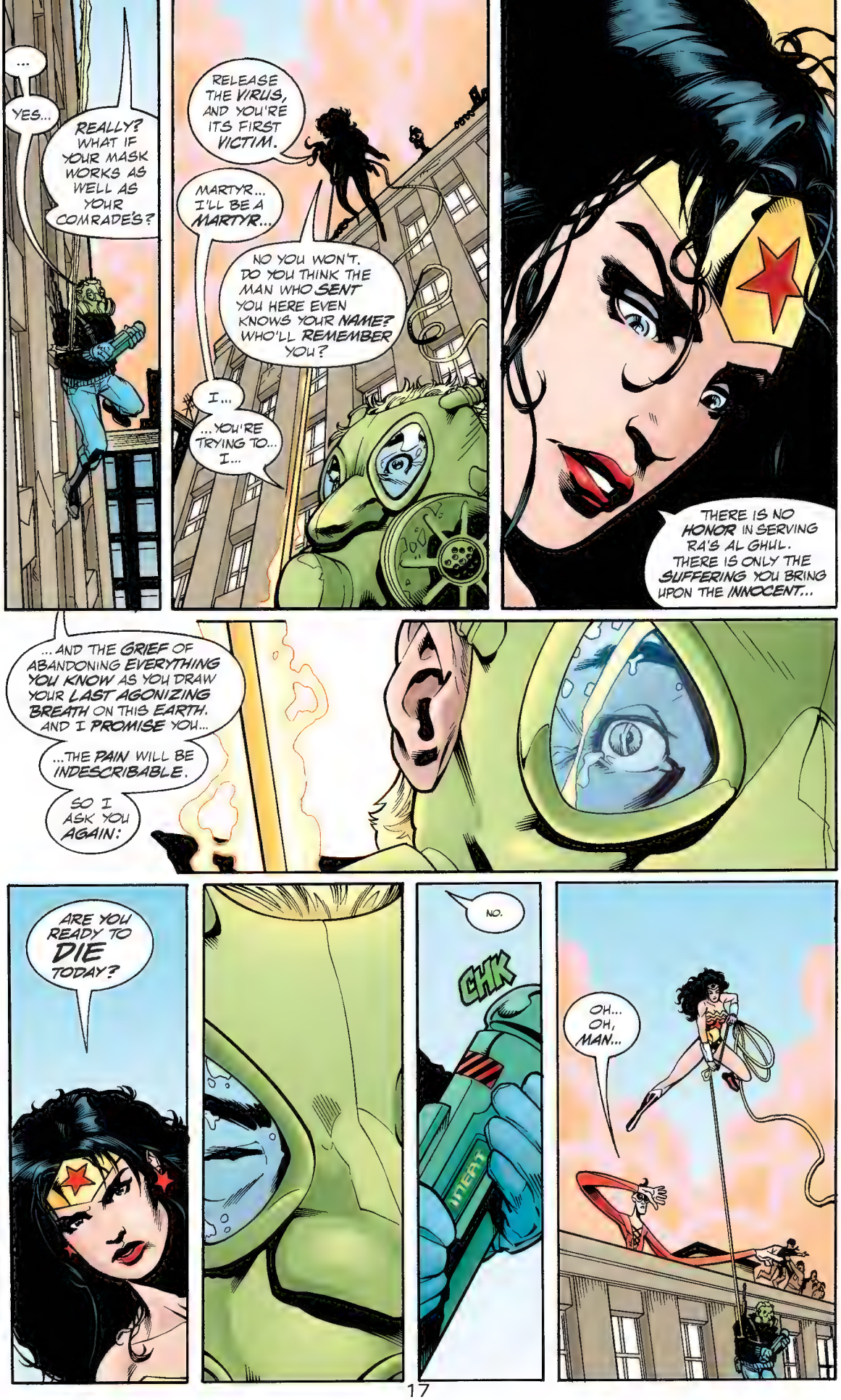
AGREED. WHY DON'T WE START BY TAKING YOU OUT OF THE PICTURE?
HE'S YOURS, BATMAN.
WHAROOM
I'VE GOT THE--
NO.
WHERE'S TALIA, RA'S? WHERE IS SHE?
IF ONLY I KNEW, DETECTIVE--BUT MY DAUGHTER WENT MISSING AFTER BETRAYING ME. WORRY NOT, HOWEVER.
I WILL FIND HER--AND SHE WILL BE... PUNISHED FOR HER BETRAYAL.
TAK
IN THE MEANTIME, ALLOW ME TO REPRIORITIZE YOUR CONCERNS.

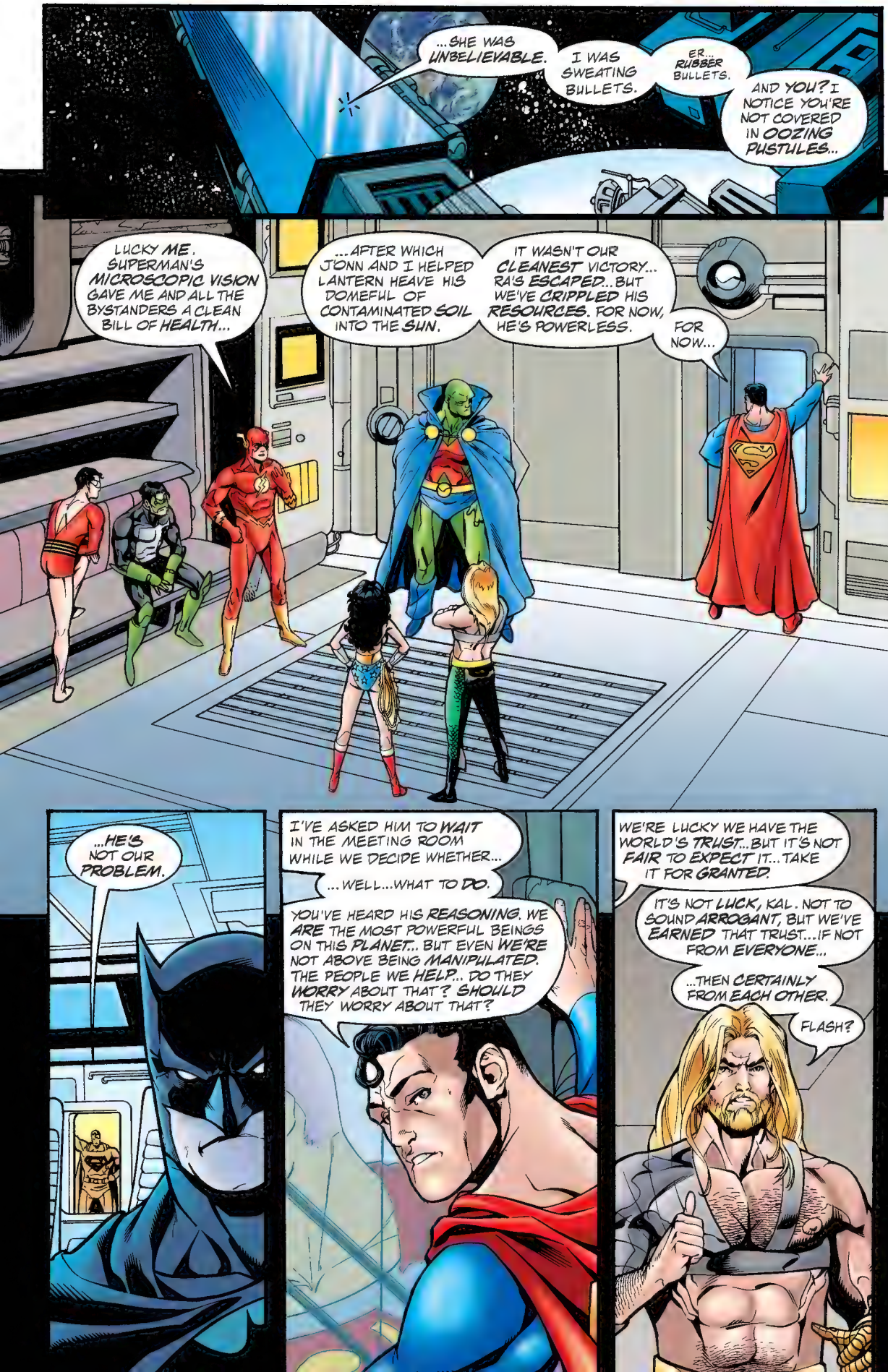
CHANK
PAF

ARTHUR?
ARTHUR, NO! THE WAYNES--
--ARE ACCOUNTED FOR, SUPERMAN.
"LET US HOPE WE CAN SAY THE SAME FOR--"
RA'S!
WHERE IS HE, KANT?
SAFELY AWAY, DETECTIVE-- JUST AS I SHALL SOON BE!

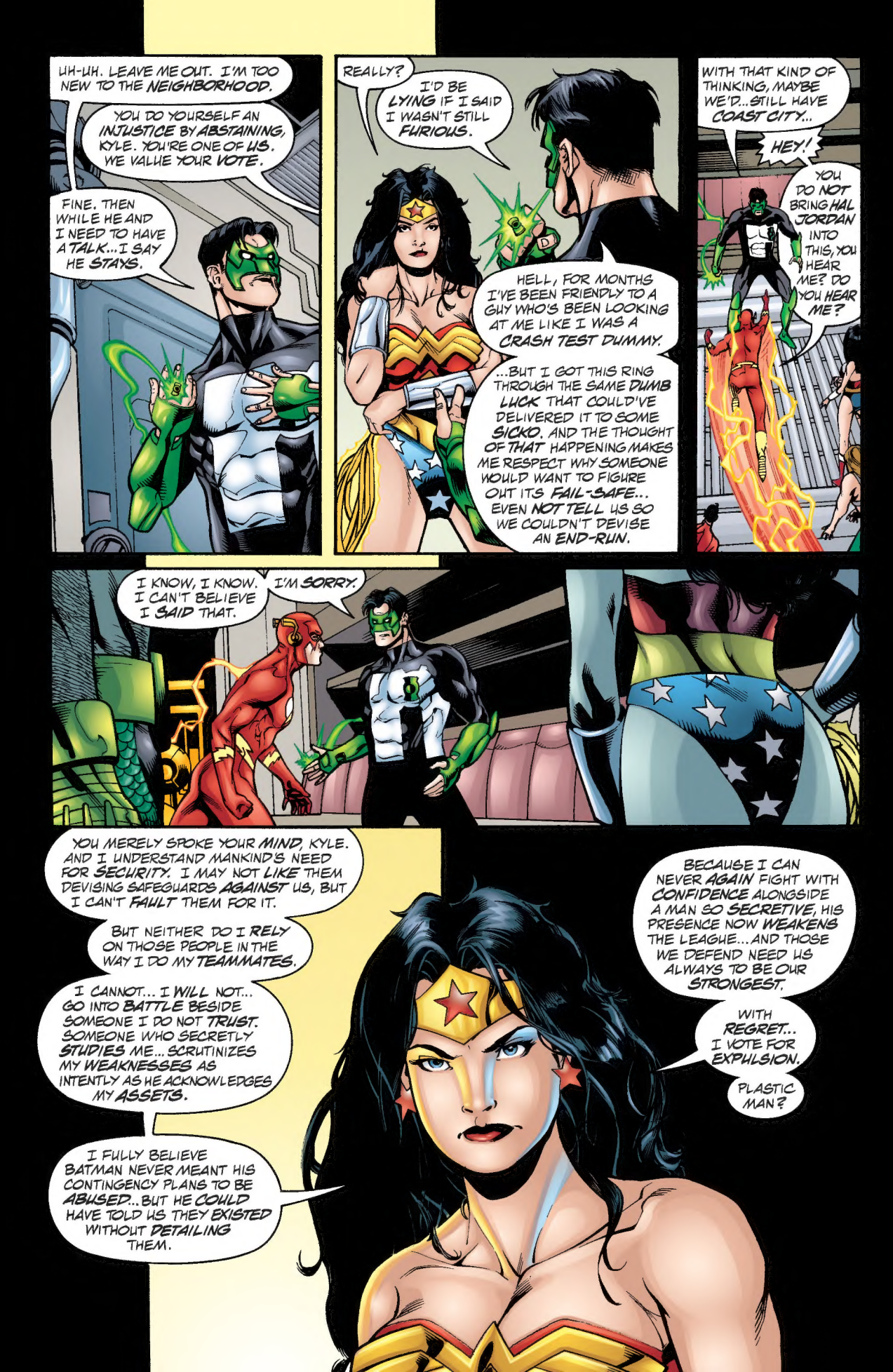
DON'T COUNT ON IT.
:KKUHH:
A-AQUAMAN? THOUGHT... YOU WERE...
DEAD? THANK J'ONN. HE FORCED ME TO CONQUER MY HYDROPHOBIA RATHER THAN SUFFOCATE IN THE AIR.
AT MY LIFE-OR-DEATH MOMENT, HE GAVE ME STRENGTH BY STANDING WITH ME.
THAT'S THE WAY THE LEAGUE WORKS...
...IN THEORY.
KANT TOLD THE TRUTH. NEITHER J'ONN NOR I SEE RA'S ANYWHERE. HE'S GONE.
STILL, HE CAN'T BUILD ANOTHER TOWER OF BABEL WITHOUT THE DOCTOR HERE... AND THE U.N. COURT WILL PUT HIM AWAY FOR LIFE.
SNATCH
NOT BEFORE HE GIVES US THE INFORMATION WE CAME FOR. THE WORLD STILL HANGS IN THE BALANCE.
RA'S' BIOTERRORISTS, KANT. WHERE IN RHAPASTAN ARE THEY? WHERE?
IT D-DOESN'T MUH-MATTER! B-BY NOW, THEY'VE L-LIBERATED THE GERM CANISTERS! BY NOW--
--THEIR MISSION IS FINISHED--!

DON'T!
DON'T.
CAREFUL! HE TWISTS HIS WRIST...
I CAN REACH HIM, BUT NOT FAST ENOUGH. YOU GO, I'LL CATCH THE KIDS.
NO. ANY SUDDEN MOVE AND HE'LL ACT.
WHICH LEAVES US WITH WHAT?
THE FACT THAT HE HESITATED... AND THE LEVERAGE THAT GIVES US.
YOU! THE MAGIC OF THE LASSO COMPELS YOU TO SPEAK ONLY THE TRUTH!
SO TELL ME:
ARE YOU READY TO DIE TODAY?

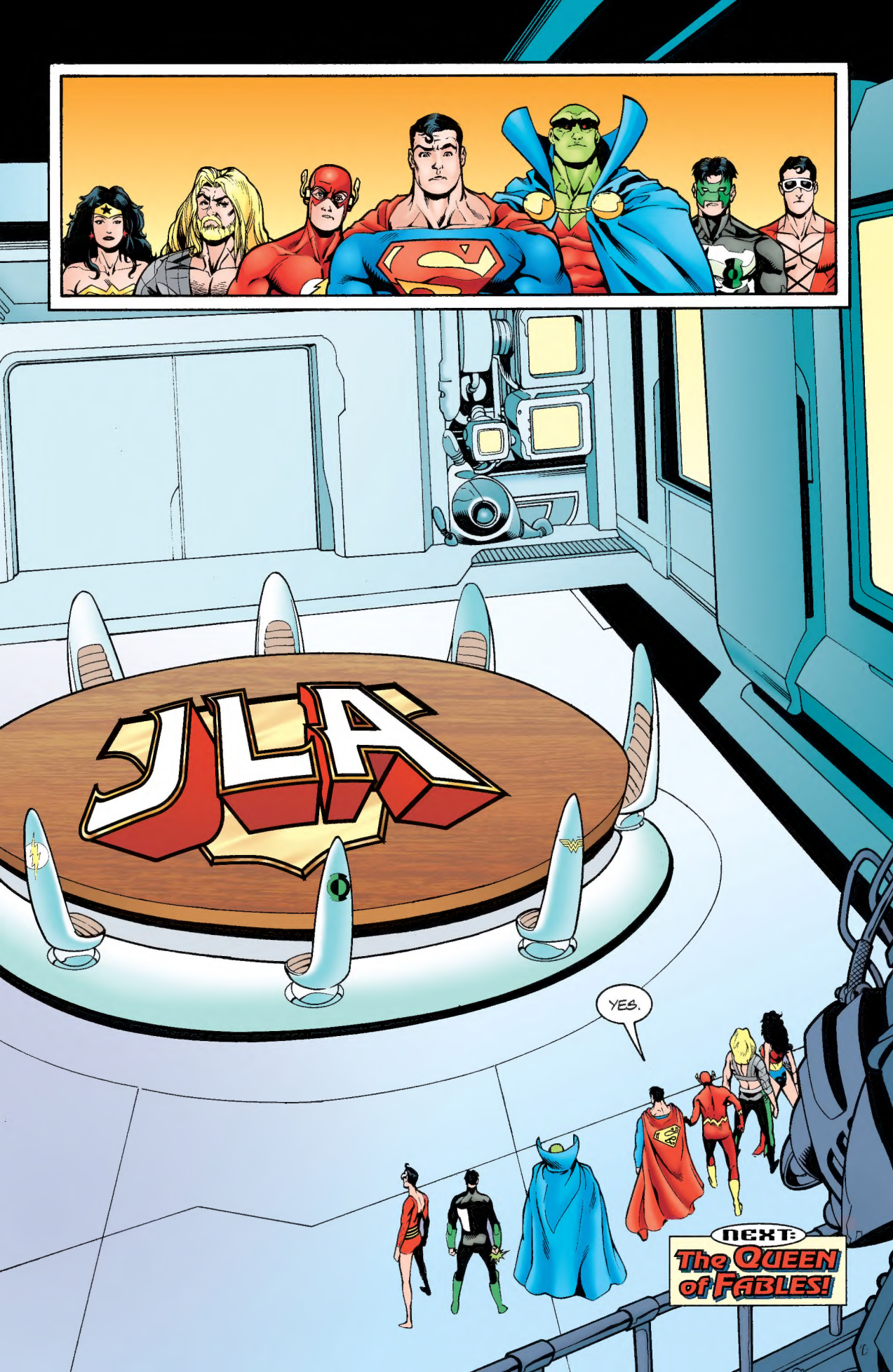

...
YES...
REALLY? WHAT IF YOUR MASK WORKS AS WELL AS YOUR COMRADE'S?
RELEASE THE VIRUS, AND YOU'RE ITS FIRST VICTIM.
MARTYR... I'LL BE A MARTYR...
NO YOU WON'T. DO YOU THINK THE MAN WHO SENT YOU HERE EVEN KNOWS YOUR NAME? WHO'LL REMEMBER YOU?
I...
...YOU'RE TRYING TO... I...
THERE IS NO HONOR IN SERVING RA'S AL GHUL. THERE IS ONLY THE SUFFERING YOU BRING UPON THE INNOCENT...
... AND THE GRIEF OF ABANDONING EVERYTHING YOU KNOW AS YOU DRAW YOUR LAST AGONIZING BREATH ON THIS EARTH. AND I PROMISE YOU...
...THE PAIN WILL BE INDESCRIBABLE.
SO I ASK YOU AGAIN:
ARE YOU READY TO DIE TODAY?
NO.
CHK
OH... OH, MAN...


...SHE WAS UNBELIEVABLE.
I WAS SWEATING BULLETS.
ER... RUBBER BULLETS.
AND YOU? I NOTICE YOU'RE NOT COVERED IN OOZING PUSTULES...
LUCKY ME. SUPERMAN'S MICROSCOPIC VISION GAVE ME AND ALL THE BYSTANDERS A CLEAN BILL OF HEALTH...
...AFTER WHICH J'ONN AND I HELPED LANTERN HEAVE HIS DOMEFUL OF CONTAMINATED SOIL INTO THE SUN.
IT WASN'T OUR CLEANEST VICTORY... RA'S ESCAPED...BUT WE'VE CRIPPLED HIS RESOURCES. FOR NOW, HE'S POWERLESS.
FOR NOW...
...HE'S NOT OUR PROBLEM.
I'VE ASKED HIM TO WAIT IN THE MEETING ROOM WHILE WE DECIDE WHETHER...
...WELL...WHAT TO DO.
YOU'VE HEARD HIS REASONING. WE ARE THE MOST POWERFUL BEINGS ON THIS PLANET... BUT EVEN WE'RE NOT ABOVE BEING MANIPULATED. THE PEOPLE WE HELP... DO THEY WORRY ABOUT THAT? SHOULD THEY WORRY ABOUT THAT?
WE'RE LUCKY WE HAVE THE WORLD'S TRUST...BUT IT'S NOT FAIR TO EXPECT IT...TAKE IT FOR GRANTED.
IT'S NOT LUCK, KAL. NOT TO SOUND ARROGANT, BUT WE'VE EARNED THAT TRUST...IF NOT FROM EVERYONE...
...THEN CERTAINLY FROM EACH OTHER.
FLASH?

I... BATMAN BROUGHT UP THE AGAMEMNO CASE...BUT I WAS JUST A KID THEN. I WASN'T IN THE THICK OF IT.
I CERTAINLY REMEMBER PEOPLE BEING AFRAID OF THE JLA WHEN THEY THOUGHT YOU'D GONE BAD, BUT...
I DON'T KNOW. IF YOU'RE ASKING ME SHOULD WE VOTE HIM OUT... I DON'T LIKE HIM VERY MUCH RIGHT NOW, BUT EXPULSION? NO. WHAT IF HE'S GOT A POINT? WHO AM I TO ARGUE WITH BATMAN? WHAT IF THERE SHOULD BE STRATEGIES AGAINST US?
WE'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT STRATEGY, WALLACE. WE'RE TALKING ABOUT TEAMWORK.
WE'RE TALKING ABOUT SOMEONE WHO CLAIMS TO BE ONE OF US WHILE SECRETLY CATALOGUING US FROM A COOL DISTANCE-- AND I BELIEVE I KNOW WHY. HE'S AFRAID THAT--
AFRAID? BATMAN?
YOU'RE TAKING HIS SIDE. YOU WOULD. AS I REMEMBER, YOU USED TO KEEP DOSSIERS ON US YOURSELF..
LONG AGO, ARTHUR... WHEN I WAS AN ALIEN ALL ALONE ON THE EARTH. WHEN I HAD NO IDEA WHO TO TRUST.
AND I NEVER DESIGNED WEAPONS AND TRAPS. THE FILES I KEPT WERE A MATTER OF DEFENSE... NOT OFFENSE.
AND THEY STILL FELL IN THE WRONG HANDS... JUST LIKE BATMAN'S. DON'T GO EASY ON HIM JUST BECAUSE YOU--
BECAUSE I WHAT? BECAUSE I WENT EASY ON MYSELF? IS THAT WHAT YOU THINK?
DO YOU KNOW THE SHAME I FELT OVER THAT? DO YOU REALLY THINK I HAVE EVER FORGIVEN MYSELF FOR BEING THAT DISTRUSTFUL?
WE DID.
DID YOU? THEN WHY DO YOU BRING IT UP, ARTHUR?
DO YOU NOT THINK I HAVE SPENT EVERY WAKING MOMENT SINCE THEN TRYING TO ABSOLVE MYSELF OF--
J'ONN ARTHUR! STOP IT!
... I IN NO WAY APPROVE OF BATMAN'S ACTIONS, BUT I WOULD BE A HYPOCRITE TO VIEW THEM AS A CAUSE FOR EXPULSION.
I SAY HE STAYS.
KYLE?


UH-UH. LEAVE ME OUT. I'M TOO NEW TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD.
YOU DO YOURSELF AN INJUSTICE BY ABSTAINING, KYLE. YOU'RE ONE OF US. WE VALUE YOUR VOTE.
FINE. THEN WHILE HE AND I NEED TO HAVE A TALK...I SAY HE STAYS.
REALLY?
I'D BE LYING IF I SAID I WASN'T STILL FURIOUS.
HELL, FOR MONTHS I'VE BEEN FRIENDLY TO A GUY WHO'S BEEN LOOKING AT ME LIKE I WAS A CRASH TEST DUMMY.
...BUT I GOT THIS RING THROUGH THE SAME DUMB LUCK THAT COULD'VE DELIVERED IT TO SOME SICKO. AND THE THOUGHT OF THAT HAPPENING MAKES ME RESPECT WHY SOMEONE WOULD WANT TO FIGURE OUT ITS FAIL-SAFE... EVEN NOT TELL US SO WE COULDN'T DEVISE AN END-RUN.
WITH THAT KIND OF THINKING, MAYBE WE'D...STILL HAVE COAST CITY...
HEY!
YOU DO NOT BRING HAL JORDAN INTO THIS, YOU HEAR ME? DO YOU HEAR ME?
I KNOW, I KNOW. I CAN'T BELIEVE I SAID THAT.
I'M SORRY.
YOU MERELY SPOKE YOUR MIND, KYLE. AND I UNDERSTAND MANKIND'S NEED FOR SECURITY. I MAY NOT LIKE THEM DEVISING SAFEGUARDS AGAINST US, BUT I CAN'T FAULT THEM FOR IT.
BUT NEITHER DO I RELY ON THOSE PEOPLE IN THE WAY I DO MY TEAMMATES.
I CANNOT... I WILL NOT... GO INTO BATTLE BESIDE SOMEONE I DO NOT TRUST. SOMEONE WHO SECRETLY STUDIES ME... SCRUTINIZES MY WEAKNESSES AS INTENTLY AS HE ACKNOWLEDGES MY ASSETS.
I FULLY BELIEVE BATMAN NEVER MEANT HIS CONTINGENCY PLANS TO BE ABUSED...BUT HE COULD HAVE TOLD US THEY EXISTED WITHOUT DETAILING THEM.
BECAUSE I CAN NEVER AGAIN FIGHT WITH CONFIDENCE ALONGSIDE A MAN SO SECRETIVE, HIS PRESENCE NOW WEAKENS THE LEAGUE...AND THOSE WE DEFEND NEED US ALWAYS TO BE OUR STRONGEST.
WITH REGRET... I VOTE FOR EXPULSION.
PLASTIC MAN?

C'MON, MAN. HE BROUGHT YOU IN.
YEAH. YEAH, HE DID.
I OWE HIM. I KNOW THAT.
THEN...?
GET HIM OUT OF HERE.
VERY WELL. THREE FOR MEMBERSHIP TERMINATION, THREE AGAINST.
GUESS THAT MAKES YOU THE SWING VOTE.
YOU'RE THE CLOSEST THING HE HAS TO A FRIEND ON THIS TEAM. HOW WELL DO YOU REALLY KNOW HIM?
OR, I GUESS, MORE TO THE POINT... HOW WELL DOES HE KNOW YOU?
WELL ENOUGH TO KNOW BETTER THAN ANY OF US HOW YOU'LL VOTE?


JLA
YES.
NEXT:
The QUEEN of FABLES!

" [A] comic legend."
– ROLLING STONE

GRANT MORRISON

"[Grant Morrison is] comics's high shaman."
– WASHINGTON POST

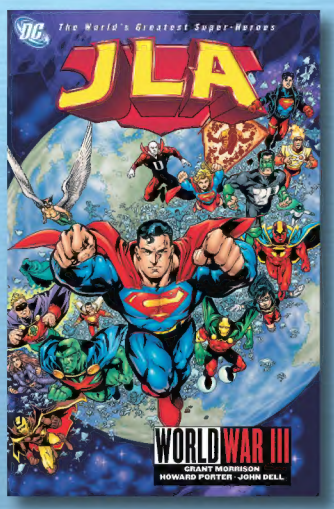
"[Grant Morrison] is probably my favorite writer. That guy has more ideas in his pinky than most people do in a lifetime."
– GERARD WAY
from MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE

VOL. 1: NEW WORLD ORDER
VOL. 2: AMERICAN DREAMS
VOL. 3: ROCK OF AGES
VOL. 4: STRENGTH IN NUMBERS
VOL. 5: JUSTICE FOR ALL
VOL. 6: WORLD WAR III

JLA VOL. 2:
AMERICAN DREAMS

JLA VOL. 4:
STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

JLA VOL. 6:
WORLD WAR III



Use the **BUY IN PRINT** feature to find a comics shop near you.
Check back here every week for **NEW DIGITAL RELEASES**!